

OVER THE TEACUPS BOUDOIR GOSSIP FOR LADY READERS . . .

Is It Best for People to Marry Young?

It is difficult to find two people whose ideas on the subject of love and marriage coincide. What one person recommends from one point of view, another person may disapprove of from another point of view. The long engagement recommended by some is apt to be condemned by others, and perhaps both sides are right, according to their different ways of thinking.

The enthusiastic advocates of early marriages exclaim, with considerable truth, "Two young hearts united, a marriage made in heaven." The very fact of a young man and maiden being near of an age inclines them to a similarity of tastes and sentiments. Both love for the first time, both are full of the courage and ardour of youth, and both are sure, so sure, that there is no happiness in the world for either of them apart from the other. Under the influence of such feelings there have been young couples who have started life with little more than a chair and a table, and very successful some of these marriages have turned out.

The husband has brought forward his best endeavours, the wife has worked no less hard and cheerfully, and, step by step, animated by love, they have won their way upward.

Where husband and wife are well matched, the tie that is knit by these early years of struggle and mutual self-denial is of necessity far closer and more intimate than formed later in life by a couple who have waited to begin where their parents left off.

It is frequently remarked that the first year of married life is seldom the happiest, and that, if the first twelve months can be safely tided over without breach or storm, the peace and comfort of the future becomes assured. One reason why the first year is the most difficult to negotiate is not far to seek.

Few people really know each other until they come to live under the same roof, and engaged couples are no exception to the rule. It is after they are married that they for the first time become aware of each other's true character, habits, and opinions, and in the process undoubtedly receive many agreeable surprises and unpleasant shocks.

But the more youthful the pair, the easier they find it to conform one to the other. The neat and trim girl of twenty does not worry herself into a fever and cold her husband into bad tempers over his incorrigible carelessness and lack of order and age, whose tidiness had grown upon her to the extent of prissiness and preciseness.

No; she gradually instils a little of her own punctuality into him, while the effort of keeping him up to the mark in that respect effectually counterbalances any tendency of method, as might be the bride of more mature years.

In the same way a prudent young husband acts as a check upon an extravagant girl wife. She has been married almost out of the schoolroom, and is naturally inclined to look up to and follow her husband's lead in everything. Unconsciously she is influenced by his serious turn of mind; equally unconsciously she is checked by her frivolity, until, as the years go by, their two natures harmonise more and more.

But perhaps the hindrance of two such temperaments ten years or more, which each has become set in their way of life, and then far from ones disposition happily rounding off the corners of the other, there will, in all probability, be very decided and unhappy friction. Certainly one of the great advantages of marrying early is the plasticity of nature which belongs to youth, and youth only.

In youth both persons, the man and the woman, leave their parents' homes to make a home of their own. They are accustomed to the give and take of family life, the household is run on lines to give the greatest pleasure and comfort to the greatest number, and not for any one member's individual comfort and pleasure. Consequently, both the young husband and the young wife regard with proportionate pride and satisfaction a home in which they find themselves of chief and first importance—a domain, however small, in which they are practically king and queen, and their word law.

It seems an easy thing to the young wife to please her husband, to devote her services to one person and defer to his wishes, where formerly she was at the beck and call of half a dozen members of her family, and must invariably consult the convenience of several before she could carry out the least plan on her own account.

The young husband, too, so proud he is of being master in his own house, is willing to content himself with far less luxury than he may have been accustomed to in his parents' house, and, if the cooking leaves something to be desired, he considers such shortcomings compensated by the act that he pays for everything, and that he is monarch of all he surveys. It is so true that there is no place like home, and that the neatest goods and chattels of one's very own acquire a value quite independent of their real worth.

Compare, however, the experiences of a middle-aged bachelor and the woman who similarly postpones matrimony. Both are probably accustomed to the many forms of luxurious selfishness which those who live in single blessedness are prone to indulge in. The man has his way in life, his set of acquaintances, his flat or lodgings. The woman has equally her way of life, her social circle, her club, and her own menage. One likes a late dinner, the other fancies an early one, and the digestion of each refuses to accommodate itself to the digestion of the other. Then the husband, from long habits of bachelorhood, has acquired a facility of smoking silently for hours together, to the umbrage of his wife. On her side, accustomed to independent coming and going, she finds it irksome to be unable to leave the house without at the same time giving reasons, explanations, and orders.

This is the gloomy side of late marriage. A more cheerful view suggests that a man is more capable of fixing his affections after thirty years of age, and that any choice made before that age runs the risk of being immature; while after thirty, in the case of both men and women, the character is formed, and the affections, once bestowed, seldom swerve.

The French have also a saying which implies that if no woman is worth looking at after thirty no girl is worth talking to before, which would seem to say that with every year a woman gains something in tact, experience, and sympathy; the chief qualifications calculated to make home and husband happy.

Things a Woman Should Not Tell.

Confidence between lovers is an excellent and most desirable attitude of mind; between man and wife it is essential to married happiness; there can be little joy or peace in the household which harbours doubt and distrust as daily companions.

But confidence is one thing; confidence quite another; the two are to the full as different as are nerve and nerves. It is not necessary to thorough confidence between two people that the two

should share every thought, should express every feeling; still less, that they should tell one another all that they know. Indeed, a wise and delicate reserve, even concealment, is more conducive to sympathy and affection than the blunt frankness which blurts out its opinions and tells all its knows, without stopping to think how the telling may affect the hearer. Moreover, it is a true saying that:

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'Tis folly to be wise."

And there is a possibility that one may be misinformed or mistaken as to the point of view. The fruit which lost our first parents Eden was that of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The question of what and what not to tell, both before and after marriage, is one which must be influenced in its answer by circumstances and governed by tact and discretion. There are some things which may be forgotten and done with, as one closes a finished chapter in a book which one has read for the last time; there are others which it is impossible to forget, the consequences of which must endure for a lifetime, perchance longer.

These last no man or woman has the right to conceal from any who is to share that life. It neither is wise nor well; it is dishonourable to enter into matrimony with a ghastly skeleton hidden in a closet, of which, with its gruesome contents, the party of the second part is kept in ignorance until flight is no longer possible. When the bones have been buried beyond chance of resurrection, and the closet, swept, scoured, and garnished, lies open to view, apparently just like any other household cupboard, and to the full as innocuous, it may be, as the French say, quite another pair of shoes. In a popular novel a clever woman of the world advises a newly-married friend: "Always tell your husband what you feel sure he will find out anyway. It is a good plan to have the first telling of whatever may be told about you or your affairs." Which, since there is much, sometimes everything, in the art of putting things, is sage counsel.

When there is an innocent secret which cannot be kept after marriage, and which, were it known beforehand, possible might make a difference in the feeling of the one who discovers it instead of being honestly informed concerning it, it is wiser from even a selfish standpoint to own up to it before marriage. "Open confession," then, is most assuredly "good for the soul." Nobody likes to be cheated, and few there be who forgive it.

There is an element of jealousy in the love of some men and women which prevents them from enjoying the bliss of the present and drives the into search out the past.

As for the man he always wants to feel sure that the woman of his choice never has loved, and never will, nor can, love anyone but himself. Which is why the newly-engaged love is given to asking again and again: "Did you ever love any other man?" To which query the woman who is wise will answer discreetly, without meriting admissions.

But above all it is unwise for any woman to become confidential and show her husband old love letters. In the first place, it is dishonourable, since, when a man asks a woman to marry him, he pays her the biggest compliment in his power, and if she refuses him she at least is bound not to boast of her victory. Then, also, a more self-interested motive should control her and keep her silent. A husband rarely is well inclined toward the man who has made love to his wife, even before he came on the scene. He always has a sense of injury when his wife speaks of the other man kindly, and, while he may say but little, the fact re-

mains that he does not like it. So the less a woman tells her husband of her old love affairs the better for her and for him.—Helen Oldfield in the "New York American."

How Women Prey Upon Their Own Sex.

When allusion is made to woman's fascinations the general idea is that the victim of them is always man. This is not so, for some women there are who are endowed with a special gift of exercising strange influence over their sisters. And sometimes this power is turned to evil account.

"With the face of a saint, she is perhaps the worst woman in Chicago," was the startling "character" given, not long since, to one beautiful young woman who at present is in prison. This girl—she was little more—had made discovery of a fact that is little suspected—namely: that there was a considerable number of women who are extremely sensitive to the attractions of feminine beauty. Her plan was to keep migrating from one lodging or boarding house to another, until she came across a landlady who was obviously lost in admiration of the natural charms of her guest. On that admiration the swindler traded. She paid no rent; she sent in bills to be paid by her hostess, from whom she also freely borrowed money. Two or three women she completely ruined; yet when she stood in the dock the victims said: "No; being so lovely as that, she cannot really have meant to rob us."

PRETENDED TO BE LONELY.

"I have heard that you will travel to Europe with your fifth girl. I am lonely. Will you let me act as your companion?" The demure looking woman who made this appeal to a certain well known society woman ultimately received "Yes" as her answer. And the night before the vessel sailed, from a New York hotel, the lonely one disappeared with all the traveller's luggage. No complete sweep did she make that she even took the apparel which the little daughter had that day been wearing. Practice making perfect, this woman repeated this trick time after time, working between America and England and other countries, sometimes taking long sea voyages and stealing her employer's possessions at the end of the trip. In each case the victims confessed that it was the woman's plaintive plea of being "so lonely" that had put them off their guard.

COLLECTING FOR ALLEGED HOMES

Women swindlers who find they can create an impression on the sympathies of other women frequently make household donation collecting their specialty. One of them, who got large amounts for a "home" that did not exist, systematically exploited eight different cities. She kept a notebook, and from that it appeared that on an average she received sixty subscriptions from every hundred women householders she succeeded in seeing. And so pleasing were her manners that from some 400 women called upon during many after-

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